



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bureau of Land Management
National Park Service
Bureau of Indian Affairs

Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program

Federal Subsistence Board

April 29, 2002



What is the Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program?

The *Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program* funds research studies to collect information to better manage Alaska's subsistence fisheries. Currently the program has 163 funded projects, with a funding commitment of nearly \$20 million. Project funding up to three years has been provided to State (41%), Federal (27%), and nongovernmental investigators (32%). The Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program began in 2000 under the Office of Subsistence Management, Fishery Information Services Division.

What do these projects do?

These projects address important management and regulatory issues. Local partners work with scientists to gather information. Some studies:

- Count fish through weirs, sonar, and tagging
- Estimate fish harvests through permits, calendars, mapping, surveys, and interviews
- Collect oral histories from rural residents and local subsistence users
- Provide information on fish species and genetics

How are projects selected?

Projects are selected by the *Federal Subsistence Board* (Board). The *Board* uses an extensive selection process to decide which studies to fund. A *Call for Proposals* is issued to find studies that will scientifically address the needs identified by the *Regional Advisory Councils* (Councils). The *Councils* represent 10 regions throughout Alaska. Council members are rural residents and subsistence users who meet regularly to identify regional issues and information needs regarding subsistence fish and wildlife.

Chinook and Sockeye Salmon in the Copper River: Sample Projects

The *Southcentral Council* advised the *Board* that more information was needed about the Copper River's chinook and sockeye salmon fisheries. The Board funded several *Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program* projects to address these needs. This river system has complex geographical features and salmon harvests, making it difficult to find accurate information about fish strength and population. Several project summaries are included on the back of this information sheet.

For more information, please contact Steve Klein at the Office of Subsistence Management, (800) 478-1456 or (907) 786-3605 (steve_klein@fws.gov), or fax: (907) 786-3612. TTY users may call through the Federal Relay Service on (800) 877-8339. Please visit our homepage at: www.r7.fws.gov/asm/home.html.

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Example Project: Copper River

State, Federal, tribal, and private organizations are currently conducting *Fisheries Resource Monitoring Program* projects in the Copper River, including:

- **Develop an Inseason Abundance Estimate in the Lower Copper River.** Sonar is being tested as an inriver “test fishery” to gauge early season salmon abundance in the Copper River just upriver of the commercial fishery. This will provide timely information on salmon abundance in the lower river, past the commercial fishery. Investigators: Native Village of Eyak and LGL Alaska Research Associates, Inc.
- **Miles Lake Sonar Improvement.** The sonar at Miles Lake is the primary assessment of sockeye salmon abundance in the drainage, and a new concrete substrate for the sonar was constructed. This will provide more accurate estimates of sockeye salmon abundance available for upriver fisheries and spawning escapement. Investigators: Alaska Department of Fish and Game.
- **Feasibility of Monitoring Chinook Salmon Escapement in the Copper River.** Fish wheels are being used to capture chinook salmon and estimate their abundance through a tagging study. This will provide more accurate estimates of chinook salmon abundance available for upriver fisheries and spawning escapement. Investigators: Native Village of Eyak and LGL Alaska Research Associates, Inc.
- **Migratory Timing and Spawning Distribution of Chinook Salmon in the Copper River.** Some of the chinook salmon captured in fishwheels will be outfitted with radio tags, and tracked to spawning sites. This will provide estimates of spawning distribution of chinook salmon throughout the drainage. Investigators: Alaska Department of Fish and Game and Native Village of Eyak.
- **Copper River Subsistence Salmon Fishery Evaluation.** Ahtna elders were interviewed to document historical and contemporary trends in upriver subsistence fisheries. This will provide Traditional Ecological Knowledge of subsistence use patterns and salmon distribution within this area. Investigators: Alaska Department of Fish and Game and Copper River Native Association.
- **Upper Copper River Salmon and Non-Salmon Subsistence Species Mapping.** Subsistence users in the Mentasta area are being interviewed to document trends in subsistence use patterns in this area. This will provide mapped documentation of this information. Investigators: Mentasta Tribal Council.
- **Workshop to Build Capacity Among Copper River Groups.** A series of workshops are being held to present, discuss, and evaluate information important to assess and manage Copper River subsistence fisheries. This will provide subsistence users better access to this information. Investigators: Copper River Native Association and LGL Alaska Research Associates, Inc.